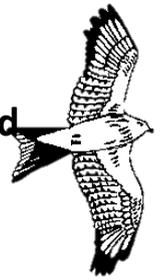




Boxgrove and Kidbrooke Park Primary Schools and Kidbrooke Park Learning Centre



COMPLAINTS POLICY

- The school aims to be a caring, positive and supportive place where young people can learn and receive education in an appropriate manner.
- We want to listen to parents' views about their children's education and well-being at school.
- We will try to resolve parents' or any third party concerns and complaints as informally and quickly as possible.
- We will take any complaints seriously and provide a thorough and appropriate response.
- No pupil will be penalised as a result of her/his parent or any third party making a complaint.
- We aim to learn from any mistakes or weaknesses, in order to improve further the standards of education offered at the school.
- There is a set of clear and detailed procedures for handling complaints that is available to parents and any third parties who wish to pursue a complaint beyond the initial informal stage.
- There is a leaflet which is provided to all parents and any third parties, outlining how they should pursue any concern or complaint that they may have.
- The school will ensure that all complaints are logged.
- The governing body as a whole will not discuss individual complaints, and any governor receiving such a complaint will direct the parent or third party to the school's complaints leaflet and procedures.
- The governing body will monitor and review the effectiveness of the policy and procedures annually by receiving a summary report of numbers and types of formal complaints together with outcomes. Individual details will not be included.
- Complaints or appeals relating to admissions, exclusions or Special Educational Needs provision will normally be handled by separate statutory mechanisms, and we will ensure that parents and any third parties are informed of how such complaints can be pursued.

Introduction

We aim to provide your child with the best possible education and meet his or her needs as well as we can. However, in any school, parents or any third parties may occasionally feel concerned about something or have a complaint. If this is the case we want to hear from you as soon as possible so that concerns can be easily resolved.. This leaflet explains how you can voice a concern or complaint, and how we will respond.

What is a complaint?

It can be a concern or problem or feeling of dissatisfaction that you have about an aspect of our work.

What do I do if I have a complaint about the school?

Tell a member of staff. Preferably speak with the member of staff most knowledgeable of the facts of the matter. He/ she will talk it over with you and try to sort things out. She/he will discuss your complaint with you and seek to resolve the matter. It may be possible to talk to your child's class teacher after school when you pick your child up, otherwise make an appointment for a convenient time. Please be assured that your child will not be penalised or treated less favourably as a result of your making a complaint.

There are certain specific complaints that are handled differently.

- If your child is refused admission to the school you have a statutory right to appeal to an independent appeals panel. The school will be able to give you details.
- If your child has been excluded for between 5 and 15 school days, you have a right to make representation to the governing body. If your child has been permanently excluded you have the right to an independent appeal.
- If your child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) and you have a complaint about her/his SEN provision, the school will be able to give you details of the Local Authority's dispute resolution arrangements, the Parent Partnership service, and the SEN Tribunal for disputes about a Statement of Special Educational Need.

What do I do if I feel my complaint hasn't been sorted out?

You may contact the school office and ask for an appointment to see the Headteacher or Head of School, if he/she is not available. The Headteacher will listen carefully and ask you any questions to help him/her understand the situation fully. He/She will probably then have to talk to other people, but will get in touch with you as soon as she is able to respond fully. This is referred to as the **informal stage** of the complaints procedure

If I feel unhappy with what the Headteacher says, what can I do then?

You may then write to the Chair of the school's governors (or designated governor), at the school address, setting out your complaint and why you are unhappy with the school's response. Please write within 14 days of receiving the Headteacher's response. The Chair (or designated governor) will write acknowledging your letter within a few days and may invite you for an informal meeting to discuss your complaint. If not, the Chair (or designated governor) will then write again once s/he has investigated more fully. You should receive a full response within 14 days. This is still referred to as the **informal stage** of the complaints procedure.

What happens if I am unhappy about the Chair of Governors' response?

You are entitled to ask a panel of governors to meet to consider your complaint. If you want to do this, write to the Chair or Clerk to the governing body within 14 days of receiving the Chair's response. Say that you have a formal complaint and that you remain unhappy with the way the school and Chair of governors have responded, and that you would like a panel of governors to consider your complaint. There is no need to write all the details of the complaint in this letter but you will be required to explain clearly what you are complaining about. The Clerk will contact you about the panel and explain what will happen. You may bring someone with you if you wish. This part of the procedure is referred to as the **formal stage** of the complaints procedure

What happens at the Panel meeting?

One of the governors will chair the meeting, and s/he will explain what will happen. You may be asked to outline your complaint. Panel members and/or the Headteacher, who will also be present, may ask you questions. The Headteacher will then explain how the school has responded to the complaint, and then you and the panel may ask the Headteacher questions. You may also ask other people (witnesses) to speak about what happened.

After this, everyone except the panel and the person taking minutes will leave, so that the panel can consider its findings. The Chair of the panel will write to you within a few days setting out the panel's findings. They will also write to the Headteacher and Chair of governors. Their findings are binding upon the school.

The panel's findings are the school's final response to you about your complaint. Schools are responsible for their own activities, and the Local Authority cannot get involved. The Local Authority cannot tell a school or governing body what to do. If you are still unhappy you could write to the Secretary of State for Education, but again there is no power to intervene unless the governing body has acted unreasonably or has failed to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

How To Complain – A Summary

1. Talk to the staff member concerned or other appropriate staff member
2. Talk to the Headteacher
3. Write to the Chair of Governors
4. Write to ask for a complaints panel

FINALLY...

Please be assured that we will take your complaint seriously and treat you fairly. If something has gone wrong we want to put it right, and if you are not happy with the result, then neither are we!

SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCESS

There are four stages available to parents or any third parties seeking to address concerns or complaints relating to their child's education at the school.

1. In most cases the parent or third party should approach the member of staff concerned, to discuss the matter informally.
2. If the parent or third party feels that the matter is not resolved or feels unable to discuss it with the staff member, s/he should then discuss it with the Headteacher or Deputy Head in her absence.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, or if the complaint is about the Headteacher, the parent or third party should write to the Chair of Governors (or designated governor) care of the school, setting out the complaint and the attempts made to resolve it. The Chair (or designated governor) will then investigate the matter and respond to the parent or third party in writing.
4. If the parent or third party remains dissatisfied, s/he should write to the Chair or Clerk to the governing body requesting that a panel of governors is convened to hear the complaint. The panel will make a definitive and final response on behalf of the school that is binding upon the Chair of Governors and Headteacher.

Should this full procedure fail to lead to a resolution of the issues in the complainant's view, s/he can write to the Secretary of State for Education at the DfES. The only situation where the DfES is likely to become involved however is where the governing body is judged to have acted unreasonably or has failed to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. Internal school matters are not in the Secretary of State's remit.

The Local Authority has no statutory power to intervene in such issues beyond giving advice or making recommendations. There is no right of appeal to the Director of Education or to Members of the Council. A final recourse for a parent or third party might be to apply to the High Court for judicial review.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR EACH STAGE

Informal Stage

1. Informal Discussion With Staff Member

The staff member will give the complainant her/his undivided attention for a reasonable time in order to listen and respond to the concern. If the staff member is unable to do so immediately, s/he will offer the complainant an appointment as soon as possible within 3 working days. If the staff member subsequently needs to investigate the issue before responding, s/he will inform the complainant and state when a response should be available, within 3 working days. If it proves impossible to meet this deadline the staff member will contact the complainant and explain the reasons for the delay and give a further time limit for their response. The staff member should consider the advisability of asking a third person to be present, and is encouraged to speak with a senior member of staff.

2. Meeting With The Headteacher

Upon receiving the complainants request for a meeting, the Headteacher will offer an appointment within 5 working days. If the Headteacher subsequently needs to investigate the issue before responding, she will inform the complainant and state when a response should be available, within 5 working days. If it proves impossible to meet this deadline the Headteacher will contact the complainant and explain the reasons for the delay and give a further time limit for their response.

The Headteacher will inform the complainant that should s/he remain dissatisfied, she/he have recourse to the governing body and should write to the Chair of Governors within 2 weeks.

3. Referral To Chair Of Governors (or designated governor)

Upon receipt of a letter of complaint, the Chair of Governors will write to the complainant within 3 days acknowledging the letter and stating that the matter will be investigated. The Chair will inform the complainant that a full response will be made in writing within 14 days. If it proves impossible to meet this deadline the Chair will write to the complainant and explain the reasons for the delay and give a further time limit for the full response.

The Chair will send a copy of the school's complaints procedures and policy to the complainant with the initial acknowledgement.

Formal Stage

4. Referral To Panel Of Governors

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the full response from the Chair of Governors (or designated governor), or if the Chair fails to respond as outlined above, the complainant may write to the Chair or Clerk of the governing body within a further 14 days, requesting that a panel of governors be convened to hear the complaint. The letter should be acknowledged within 3 days, and the panel convened to hear the complaint within a

further three weeks. The Clerk should liaise with the complainant to agree mutually convenient times.

Constitution Of Panel

The panel will consist of three governors, none of whom has detailed knowledge of the complaint or is involved personally in any way. There should be no more than one staff member on the panel.

Panel Procedure

The hearing will be minuted by someone other than a panel member. A panel member will be appointed Chair. The complainant may be accompanied by someone of their choosing. The format of the hearing should be as follows:

- Complainant outlines complaint
- Headteacher and panel are given opportunity to question complainant
- Headteacher outlines school’s response to complaint
- Complainant and panel are given opportunity to question Headteacher
- Each side may ask witnesses to speak as appropriate
- Everyone except panel and Clerk withdraw
- Panel considers its findings
- Panel writes to complainant, Chair of Governors and Headteacher setting out findings, within 2 days.
- Draft Minutes of meeting are sent to complainant, Headteacher, Chair of Governors and panel members within 7 days.
- Anyone objecting to anything in the Minutes may write their comments to the Clerk within 7 days of receiving them, and their letter will be appended to the Minutes.

Confirmation the Complaints policy in respect of Boxgrove and Kidbrooke Park Primary Schools has been discussed by the Governing Body

Signed by:

Chair of Governors: Date:
(Boxgrove primary School)

Chair of Governors: Date:
(Kidbrooke park Primary School)

Executive Headteacher: Date:

Agreed 2016
To be reviewed December 2018